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Report of the Superintending School Committee of Kittery for the Year Ending March 1856

Kittery, Me.

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OF THE



SCHOOL COMMITTEE

OF



FOR THE YEAR ENDING



PORTSMOUTH :

C. W. BREWSTER & SON, PRINTERS.

1856.

At a legal Meeting of the Inhabitants of the Town of
Kittery, held in said town on Monday, March 17, 1856,

“VOTED, that Stillman B. Allen, Esq. the Town Agent,
be and hereby is instructed to have 500 copies of the
Superintending School Committee's Report printed and
circulated for the use of the town.”

ATTEST,

ISAAC D. PHILLIPS, TOWN CLERK.

Better Late than Never.

In accordance with the foregoing vote, your Agent at this late day presents to the Town the following Report of the Superintending School Committee — Immediately after the annual town meeting, the Report was taken from the files, by the Committee, for examination, and has not been furnished for publication until this time.

The Report contains many valuable statistics and suggestions, and your Agent, while he regrets the unavoidable delay, believing that it will add to the interest already awakened in our common schools to have a printed copy of the Committee's Report placed in the hands of every family in town, presents this at the earliest possible moment.

Stillman B. Allen.

REPORT.

THE laws of this State make it the duty of your Superintending School Committee to submit to the Town an annual report.

In accordance with this provision we present the following statements, touching the condition of the several schools for the past year.

Taking the schools in their numerical order, we begin with—

DISTRICT No 1.

E. C. Spinney, Agent

During the summer term this school was taught by Miss Ann E. Otis.

The amount of money appropriated,	\$189 63
Whole No. of scholars,	116
Whole No. attending the summer term,	60
Average attendance,	50

The school was found in respectable order, and the instructress labored with assiduity to benefit the pupils, and commendable progress was made in their studies.

The winter term was taught by Mr. Frank R. Stratton.

Whole No. of scholars attending,	72
Average,	50

The school appeared to be systematically regulated and instructed, and the scholars attentive to their studies.

DISTRICT No. 2.

Dennis Shapleigh, Agent.

The amount of money appropriated, \$154 89

The summer term was taught by Miss Julia Shapleigh.

Whole No. of scholars,	90
Whole No. attending,	48
Average,	35

This school was in a good state of discipline, and manifested good improvement. The teacher seemed skilled in teaching and government.

The winter term was kept by Mr. Benning Haley, and made a very good appearance at the examination, showing the teacher's fidelity and a respectable proficiency in the pupils.

Whole attendance,	48
Average,	32

DISTRICT No. 3.

A. E. Parsons, Agent.

The amount of money appropriated, \$144 56

The summer term was taught by Miss A. A. Fernald.

Whole No. of scholars,	84
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Whole attendance,	46
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Average,	35
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The school was found well governed and respectable in improvement.

The winter school was taught by Mr. N. S. Payne.

Whole attendance,	52
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Average,	31
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Some trouble was made by a refractory scholar at the commencement of the school, and some indiscretion appeared on the part of the teacher which called for the interposition of the Committee, but some improvement was made.

DISTRICT No. 4. NORTH.

Daniel Hussey, Agent.

Amount of money appropriated,	\$144 56
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The summer school was taught by Miss H. Adams.

Whole No. of scholars,	84
Whole attendance,	45
Average,	26

Miss Adams is an approved teacher, and if all the parents in the District had co-operated with her, we think they might have had a good school.

The winter school was kept by Mr. Jefferson Lewis.

Whole attendance,	61
Average,	46

This being his first effort in teaching, we think it as successful as could have been reasonably anticipated. The pupils who attended the school stately, made fair improvement.

DISTRICT No. 4. SOUTH.

Abraham Shaw, Agent.

Amount of money appropriated,	\$135 95
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The summer term was kept by Miss Julia Young.

Whole No. of pupils,	79
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Whole attendance,	50
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Average,	35
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The order in this school was not so good as was anticipated from the former reputation of the teacher. Still, improvement was made.

The winter term was taught by Mr. D. B. Harris, who failed to establish proper government, and consequently was not successful in his labors.

Whole attendance,	44
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Average,	33
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Your Committee made extra visits and efforts to secure a proper discipline in this school, but without success. There appeared to be a want of co-operation, on the part of parents, with the teacher.

DISTRICT No. 5.

Samuel Fletcher, Agent.

Amount of money appropriated, \$246,42

This school in the summer was kept by Miss Catherine C. Bellamy.

Whole number of scholars, 149

Whole attendance, 76

Average, 52

This was worthy of being reckoned a model school for the place. The instruction was thorough. In drawing maps on the black-board, the classes in geography exceeded anything we have seen in this town by scholars of their age. Miss Bellamy deserves high praise as a teacher.

The winter term of this school was kept by Mr. John W. Green.

Whole attendance, 57

Average, 41

It appeared very promising at the commencement. The teacher seemed to understand his business, and promised fair to have a first-rate school ; but at the close, less proficiency was found to have been made than was anticipated in the beginning. Your committee would respectfully recommend, that this district make arrangements to grade this school (after the manner of district No. 9) by providing another school-room for the younger pupils.

DISTRICT No. 6.

Noah Hurst, Agent.

Amount of money appropriated, \$129 07

The summer term of this school was kept by
Miss Ruth C. Parker.

Whole number of scholars, 57

Whole attendance, 36

Average, 19

The attendance on this school was small, and the pupils disorderly; still, they seem to have made some improvement.

This school, in the winter, was kept by Mr. S. B. Shaw about seven weeks, and by Mr. C. J. Hutchings about four weeks.

Whole attendance, 43

Average, 25

This school seemed, at each time it was visited by your Committee, to be well governed; and still there was much complaint entered against the first teacher; which led him to abandon the school to be finished by his successor. Had the parents sustained the first teacher, and conferred with him in a spirit of friendship, the school might have been much more profitable.

DISTRICT No. 7.

James Philbrook, Agent.

Amount of money appropriated, \$158 55

The summer school was kept by Miss Susan Stratton.

Whole number of scholars,	98
Whole attendance,	61
Average,	37

Miss Stratton was successful. The discipline was good, and the pupils made good progress in their studies.

The winter school was taught by Mr. C. P. Flanders.

Whole attendance,	61
Average,	47

This school appeared orderly, and the teacher manifested a tact for governing and instructing, and good proficiency was generally made.

DISTRICT No. 8.

Agent.

Amount of money appropriated,	\$89 00
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This school was taught both summer and winter by Miss Elizabeth C. Goodsoe, and made excellent proficiency.

Whole number of scholars,	43
Whole attendance,	16
Average,	14

The pupils in this school excel most others of their age in the town, in spelling and some other branches. The good condition in which it was found reflects credit upon the parents, evincing their cordial co-operation with the teacher.

DISTRICT No. 9.

Charles E. Hayes, Agent.

Amount of money appropriated, \$260 19

This school, for a few years past, has been divided into two departments ; having two female teachers in the summer, and a male and female teacher in the winter. The grading was made by assigning all under eight years of age to one department, and all over this age to the other.

The primary department of the summer school was kept by Miss E. Tobey, and the other department by Miss M. A. Clifford.

Whole number of scholars,	157
Whole attendance,	55
Average,	47

The discipline in each was good, and a very commendable advancement was made in the studies.

The winter school in the primary department was kept by Miss M. A. Clifford, successfully as in the summer

The winter school in the other department was kept by Mr. B. F. Merrill, and appeared to be the best managed school in town for the season.

Whole attendance,	50
Average,	39

The pupils manifested a deep interest in their teacher and in their studies, and rank among the best of our scholars. By the voluntary contribution of the scholars and their parents, a large terrestrial globe, together with outline maps, have been procured for the use of the school. Other districts would do well, in like manner, to obtain these valuable articles of school apparatus.

DISTRICT No. 10.

Joseph Frisbee, Agent.

Amount of money appropriated, \$118 42

This school was kept in summer by Miss M. E. Remick.

Whole number of scholars,	63
Whole attendance,	30
Average,	19

The order and instruction in this school was very commendable, and a fair improvement made by the pupils.

The winter school was kept by Mr. J. P. Shaw.

Whole attendance,	44
Average,	25

The government was good, and the school profitable.

DISTRICT No 11.

Agent.

Amount of money appropriated,	\$52 86
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This school was kept by Miss A. W. Spinner, who is a thorough and efficient teacher. The school made good improvement in the studies.

Whole number of scholars,	22
Whole attendance,	16
Average,	13

DISTRICT No. 12.

Jeremiah Gunnison, Agent.

Amount of money appropriated,	\$149 72
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The summer school was taught by Miss L. A. Tilton, under whose charge the pupils made good proficiency. As there were two private schools in the district at the same time, this school was very small, about 13 being the average attendance.

The winter term was kept by Miss H. H. Shapleigh.

Whole number of scholars,	87
Whole attendance,	49
Average,	25

The reputation of Miss Shapleigh as a teacher led us to expect more than ordinary improvement, and we were not disappointed. The management of this school, including discipline and the mode of instruction, was highly satisfactory. In these points it was not exceeded by more than one school in the town.

The whole number of scholars in the town, comprised in the thirteen districts, between the ages of 4 and 21 years, as returned by the district agents, is 1147.

The amount of money raised for the support of schools the past year is \$1974 55; which allows to each scholar about \$1 72.

Whole number who have attended the summer schools, 619; whole number who have attended the winter schools, 633; average attendance of all the schools in the summer 440, in the winter 432.

As the laws of this State make it the duty of the Committee "*to direct what books shall be used in the respective schools,*" we have subjoined the following list of such as are now in general use, that parents may know what books to procure for their children, independent of the dictation of teachers

The New Testament Scripture,

Town's series of Reading Books, viz.:

1st, 2d, 3d and 4th Books,

Do. Speller and Definer,

Power and Tweed's first lessons in Eng. Grammar,

Weld's English Grammar,

Do. Parsing Book,

Holbrook's Child's first book in Arithmetic,

W. Colburn's first lessons,

Greenleaf's Common School Arithmetic,

Do. National,

Smith's Primary Geography,

Do. large,

P. Parley's first book of History,

Goodrich's History of the United States.

Calvin Cutter's Physiology, with Charts.

The superintendence of all the schools, including the examination and recommendation of candidates for teaching ; the usual visits to the schools, and the adjustment of difficulties between teachers and parents, growing out of cases of discipline, constitute a work of no ordinary responsibility.—Wherever we have found a school in an unsatisfactory state, and complaints of disorderly conduct and truancy, the main reasons have generally been outside of the school-room, and beyond the direct control of the teacher.

A disposition has been manifested on the part of some parents to take side with the scholar against the teacher, in respect to discipline, to the serious injury of the school. This has been the case in some instances, even before the school had commenced, or the teacher had opportunity for a trial. This is highly reprehensible, tending to discourage young men from attempting to teach, cramping their influence over pupils and rendering the schools difficult to manage. It should be remembered that parents can do much to aid the teacher in the work of discipline and in making the schools profitable. Indeed, it is not easy to measure the extent of home influence on our Public Schools. It can induce the evils of tardiness and absence, or ensure punctuality and regular attend-

ance. It can render school management easy or difficult. It can discourage teachers, or inspire in them a spirit of confidence, by enjoining upon the pupils the duty of ready and cheerful obedience.

It can be indifferent to the intellectual and moral improvement of the scholar, and beget in him indifference in return ; or by a lively interest in the schools, a proper home influence may be made to aid immensely the efforts of the teacher in rendering his labors profitable. To this end, a strict watchfulness should be maintained by parents over their schools, and frequent visits made by them to the school-room.

“There are three essential elements in a good school, viz. : a competent teacher, dutiful scholars, and parents ready to co-operate with the teacher and the pupils.” Parents should guard against becoming excited against a teacher by reports of an unfavorable character, inasmuch as a great proportion of them have no better foundation than the idle gossip and the bitter spleen of ill-disposed and turbulent school boys ; and which would pass unnoticed were there not sometimes a disposition to seize upon some trifling matters and magnify them into prejudice against the teacher, to the great injury of the school. In this way well-disposed persons are sometimes led into erroneous

opinions, and the good influence of the teacher destroyed and money wasted. And all this, because parents do not take pains to go to the school-room or to the teacher and learn the facts in the case. Where some indiscretion is found on the part of the teacher, a word of friendly advice might prevent its repetition, and thus preserve the harmony of the neighborhood, promote the usefulness of the teacher and the interests of the school. Great care is required in making a proper selection of teachers, in order to secure those whose services will be most efficient and salutary.

“A teacher to deserve the epithet good, must, by nature, have the necessary qualifications of head and heart, together with a large share of that sterling quality, ‘*common sense*,’ to fit him for the important station he occupies.” In order to maintain suitable school government he must attain to habitual self-government. It is also necessary that he should have a thorough mental and moral training; be apt to teach, and love his employment. These constitute a necessary basis for the maintenance of proper discipline and accurate teaching, and for begetting in pupils a love for their school. It is important that the entrance to the portals of knowledge and mental discipline should be made attractive and pleasant by the teacher’s kindness

towards his pupils, and by the exercise of good judgment in all his duties. These qualities have been manifested to a commendable extent in many of our schools in the town, and should be reached in all.

New-England has ever taken a just pride in her Public Schools, as having an important influence in forming the character of each successive generation. To render them prosperous, among other things care should be taken to keep them free from political party spirit and religious sectarianism. These suggestions, we trust, will be appreciated by all who hold right views of the proper objects of society and of the great utility of our schools.

To aid in accomplishing these desirable ends, let men be selected for district agents who understand and will faithfully do their duty. Teachers should be engaged early in the season, that choice may be made of the best ; and none should be employed whose qualifications come short of what the laws of the State require. Let there be also a vigilant supervision of the schools, and a faithful report of them annually prepared and published ; so that teachers, parents and pupils may read the record of their own doings, and be reminded of the respon-

sibilities which devolve upon them in regard to the important interests of education.

Your Committee have endeavored to discharge the duties of their office as well as its difficulties and their circumstance would permit, and hope their services have not been entirely in vain.

Respectfully submitted.

M. F. WENTWORTH, }
A. WM. FISKE, } *Committee.*